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lost and found

by [hapakitsune](#)

Summary

Mark's first thought on getting the ransom note is, *Surely Eduardo is worth more than that.*

They grab Eduardo on his way back to his car. He struggles, tries to shout as they pin his arms behind him, but one of the men claps a foul-smelling cloth over his face and he passes out.

His last thought is, *If Mark is behind this, I'll kill him.*

Mark stays up all night working on the code for redesigning the friendship pages. He doesn't notice when the last of the other employees goes home – he's frequently the last one around anyway – and he sits in his office, typing rapidly. He falls asleep at his desk around four in the morning and is woken the next morning by his personal assistant arriving with coffee.

Eduardo comes to in a darkened room. He's curled up on his side and he can hear people talking rapidly in a language he doesn't recognize. It sounds like Russian, though he can't be sure.

There's enough light coming through the dirty window for him to see the room he's in. It looks like part of a warehouse. The floor is concrete and stained with oil. He's sitting on a mattress in the corner of the room, which he estimates is about ten by ten, and he's covered in a thin, ragged blanket. It's very cold.

He shivers, hard, and breathes out. He's reminded of all the times Mark would drag him out into the icy coldness of Boston winters, apparently without even noticing the chill, always wearing his

stupid flip-flops. He rubs at his arms desperately and hopes that whoever kidnapped him actually has plans for him.

He spends a good portion of the morning in meetings that he mostly considers to be useless. His personal assistant makes him change clothes. Her name is Janet and she reads his mail for him because she knows he finds it tedious. She can talk competently about most computer science subjects. Mark mostly likes her.

He goes to Eduardo's Facebook, more or less by habit. He doesn't know when he started stalking his ex-best friend's profile; mostly, it had been out of curiosity. He hadn't expected Eduardo to keep his account, and he definitely hadn't expected him to keep using it. He knows that Mark can see everything he wants to.

Eduardo hasn't updated his status in three days. That's not unusual. Mark doesn't know why he expected anything different. He imagines clicking on the friendship page for him and Eduardo, if one existed.

He ends up eating ramen for lunch. He has never had a great deal of appreciation for the different intricacies of gourmet food. Eduardo had.

He wonders why he's thinking so much about Eduardo. It's not something that usually happens. It's only when he looks at the calendar that he remembers that it's around the same time of year that they had started working on Facebook.

"That's a stupid reason," he says out loud and Janet says, "What?" She has mail in her hand.

"Nothing," he says. "Anything of interest?"

"Not really," she admits.

Mark does go home that night and he sleeps only after watching Discovery Channel. His bed feels very large, even though it's an average sized queen.

He wakes early, restless. He puts on his flip flops and goes for a walk around the block. He had started Facebook to get girls, or so he had thought and said. But it's been years and there haven't really been any girls, so what gives?

Mark admits that it's not like he has any particular skill with the opposite gender, or really any skill with his own gender if he really wants to get down to it, so maybe that's the problem. He wants to ask Eduardo if he'd ever gotten a girlfriend from the deal that wasn't crazy.

Mark realizes, suddenly, that he knows how Eduardo sounds when he has sex. He'd known that, intellectually; he had known, when Alice had taken him into the bathroom, that Eduardo and Christy were in there too. And he'd heard them.

He'd heard Eduardo have an orgasm. That was a weird thought.

He walks back to his house and goes to sleep.

They come in around half an hour later, though Eduardo's sense of time is warped and he can't be entirely sure what time it is. The leader is big and wearing a huge down jacket. Eduardo is just wearing his sports jacket and a pair of thin dress pants and he is shivering so hard his teeth chatter.

“We take picture,” he says gruffly and he thrusts a newspaper into Eduardo’s hands before dragging him upright and pushing him into a chair. Eduardo blinks, startled, and a flash goes off in his face. He feels dizzy, a bit like he’s going to faint. His nose itches in the tell-tale symptom of an oncoming cold.

“You’re asking for a ransom?” Eduardo asks. “There’s no one who’ll pay.” He’s lying; he technically has kidnapping insurance, has since he was a kid, but he’s sure they will try to find a way out of it.

“Your friend Mark Zuckerberg will pay for you,” the leader says dismissively.

“Mark?” Eduardo asks incredulously. “You’re kidding, right? He won’t pay for my release, we haven’t even been friends in years.”

“We are not stupid,” the leader says contemptuously, sneering down at Eduardo. “Everyone we asked says Zuckerberg will pay. You are his only friend.”

“I *was* his only friend,” Eduardo corrects. The leader backhands him hard and he falls back, catching himself on his hands. He coughs, wetly. He’s beginning to feel dizzy again and he crawls onto the mattress, huddling in the thin blankets. He can’t get warm and his teeth start to chatter.

“Do you think that I could get another blanket?”

The leader says something rude-sounding in Russian and one of the other men disappears. After a moment, Eduardo is thrown a blanket. He curls up and goes to sleep, not caring that they’re watching.

Mark’s first thought on getting the ransom note is, *Surely Eduardo is worth more than that.*

It’s a stupid thought and he’s glad he doesn’t say it out loud. He looks up and says, “How do we know this is real?”

Janet says, “There’s a picture, too.” She shakes the envelope a little and a grimy photo slides out.

Mark picks it up by the edges and lifts it so he can see. Eduardo is sitting in a chair, holding a newspaper (*How cliché*, Mark thinks) with Monday’s date. He looks bruised and tired and a little frightened. Mark stares at the dark dots that are Eduardo’s eyes.

“Pay it,” he says abruptly. “All of it.”

Janet raises her eyebrows. “Shouldn’t we call the cops?” she asks.

“Why? The cops will just get in the way. It’s much more straightforward to just get the money.” He pauses. “Or we could hire a retrieval specialist.”

“Excuse me?” Janet asks, now confused. He wonders if he’s speaking too fast for her. Many people have told him that he needs to slow down, though he’s never seen the point of it. It had been part of the reason for his last four assistants leaving.

“Someone who knows how to get him back without risking him.” Mark mentally scrolls through the people he could call. Who would know how to find a retrieval specialist? Insurance companies. Or Eduardo’s parents.

He dismisses the latter option. He doesn’t want to involve the Saverins if he doesn’t have to. Instead, he says, “I’ll call my insurance company. They have kidnapping insurance.”

“Mr. Saverin isn’t covered –” Janet begins.

“I know, I don’t care, and that isn’t the reason I’m calling them,” Mark says. “The point is they’ll know who I should contact about this. I want to make sure everything goes according to plan.”

“Why are you doing this?” Janet demands. “You aren’t even friends.”

“Maybe not, but I –” *love him*, Mark is about to say, and he blinks. “That explains a lot,” he says, mostly to himself.

“What explains a lot?” demands Janet, frustrated.

He sleeps fitfully, but he sleeps. There’s nothing much else to do, after all. He sleeps and he knows he’s getting sick because he can feel it in his lungs, his throat, his head.

He’s given soup and bread, which at least comes hot, and they give him water. They obviously want to keep him alive, which is reassuring. Or, they want to keep him alive until they get the money, which is less reassuring.

Or they’ll keep him alive until Mark says no. Eduardo’s pretty sure they’ll kill him after that.

He wants to tell the kidnappers that they should fire whoever does the research for their crew. Whoever it was obviously hadn’t looked close enough. Maybe five years ago it might have worked, but then five years ago Mark hadn’t been *Mark Zuckerberg* in the same way that he is today.

Eduardo wonders if his mother knows, if she’s worried. How many people, he thinks, have noticed that he’s gone?

It’s a stupid, self-indulgent thought. Eduardo rolls his eyes at his own overdramatic attitudes and curls up onto his side underneath the two blankets. He’s pretty sure he has a fever, because sometimes he feels too hot, but then he’ll get the chills.

He remembers that he used to sweat out his sicknesses by just burrowing under layers and layers of blankets until he just sweated out the fever. That’s not really an option now; Eduardo can still mostly see his breath when he speaks and he’s pretty sure it’s below forty, though he can’t be sure.

He wakes up again later, coughing so hard he can barely breathe. He hopes Mark contacts them soon so at least they’ll do something. Eduardo doesn’t even know if Mark has gotten the ransom yet. He hopes so. He hopes Mark looks at it and throws it away with a laugh.

Eduardo never deludes himself into thinking that Mark will actually pay it. Mark may not care that much about money, but why would he do that? To save Eduardo’s life?

Who is he kidding? They’ll kill him either way. Once he’s out-lived his usefulness, he’ll be killed and left for dead. It’s not a comforting thought, though, he thinks bitterly, at least he wouldn’t feel the cold anymore.

The retrieval specialists take stock of the ransom demand and the resources Mark has at his command. “I am willing to pay what they ask,” Mark says when asked.

They send a communication back, indicating their willingness to pay the full price of the demand once they get proof of life. The retrievals team is very clear on this point. Mark says okay and starts figuring how to get five million dollars available in cash.

“This is crazy,” Janet announces. Dustin had said a similar thing when he’d found out what was happening. Sean had said, “Eduardo? I thought that ship had sailed.”

“It’s crazy to not want him to die just because I can’t cough up a few bucks?” Mark asks.

“Jesus, Mark,” Janet says, “not that. We should have called the cops.”

“This is better,” Mark says.

Eventually, he starts to dream.

In his dreams, he’s still at Harvard. Eduardo remembers meeting Mark, and knowing that Mark would make something of himself. He remembers watching Mark fumble his way through every social interaction he ever had, but he also remembers that somehow things had always been easy between them. Until one day it hadn’t.

Eduardo has never really been sure if Mark actually understands why Eduardo was angry, or why what he did was so...infuriating.

Mark was like that. Eduardo was pretty sure that Mark just mostly didn’t understand people and so it was really bizarre that he’d landed on something as perfect and as unique as Facebook. For someone who could never really interact with other people, Mark had really understood how people interacted, what they wanted from each other.

One of the weird mysteries of life, is all.

When they come in the next time, they have a camera with a webcam attached. “Say cheese,” one of the kidnappers says. Eduardo blinks at the screen. Mark stares back.

“Hi, ‘Wardo,” Mark says, as if it hasn’t been five years since they’ve really spoken and as if Eduardo isn’t sitting in some god-forsaken warehouse freezing his ass off and more or less waiting to die. “How are you doing?”

“Considering I’ve been kidnapped and you’re the one they went to for a ransom, I’m doing pretty good,” Eduardo says dryly. “What the fuck, Mark?”

“I thought I should ask,” Mark says. Of course. “You look terrible.”

“Once again, kidnapped,” Eduardo says. He’d forgotten how difficult it was to just talk to Mark. It makes his brain hurt, trying to remember how Mark thinks. “So what, you’re going to pay?”

“I was planning on it,” Mark says. “They’ve asked for five million, I don’t know why they asked that little. They could have asked for half a billion and I still would have paid it.”

“What?” Eduardo starts to ask, but the laptop is closed before he has a chance to ask Mark what the fuck that meant.

“I probably shouldn’t have said that,” Mark says when the connection goes dead. From his right, Janet snorts.

“You think?” she asks sarcastically. “Eduardo didn’t look good.”

“He looked like shit,” Mark says succinctly. “I think he may be sick. We may need to speed up the timeline.” He turns to look at Dustin and Chris. “Did you trace the IP address?”

“It’s in New York,” Chris says. “We narrowed it down to the waterfront on Brooklyn.”

The retrieval specialist looks impressed. “Excellent,” he says. “We’ll find your boy, Mr. Zuckerberg. Hopefully you won’t need to pay the ransom.”

“I’m willing to pay it,” Mark repeats. He gets the feeling that most people the specialist deals with either don’t have the money they’re asked for, or are unwilling to shell out their savings. “I have plenty to spare.”

Janet rolls her eyes so hard that Mark suspects she’ll give herself eyestrain. “Thank you, Mr. Locke,” she says to the specialist and she shoos him from the office. “What the hell is wrong with you?” she demands of Mark.

“Why do people always ask me that?” Mark asks.

Eduardo’s cough has gotten worse. He hacks painfully and wishes he could claw out his own throat. It would probably hurt less.

He’s not sure how much time passes. He drifts in and out of sleep, shivering and feeling like crap. He hasn’t felt this sick in years, and this time he doesn’t even have a girlfriend of his mother or even a roommate to keep him company and feed him. He’s kidnapped and alone, all because he was once friends with Mark fucking Zuckerberg.

He kind of wishes he could back in time and smack himself before he approached Mark at that stupid party. His life would have been so much better. He may not have been a billionaire, but at least he wouldn’t be dying in a freezing warehouse while being held captive by some Russian gang. He could at least possibly be dying while being held captive in Brazil, where it’s warm and he knows the language.

It feels like a day later that they take him into a car and drive him five minutes to another location. He waits, fidgeting nervously. They’ve blindfolded him and his hands are bound behind him.

One of them returns and grabs Eduardo roughly, dragging from the car. He drags Eduardo inside, even though Eduardo struggles, and throws him to the ground before roughly tearing off the blindfold.

They find the warehouse where Eduardo is being held and the specialist says, “We should probably call the cops at this point.”

“They’ll just cite us for obstruction of justice,” Mark says. “Get him out of there. I’ll go in to make the drop and then we’ll get him out.”

Mark gets on a plane for New York three hours later with a briefcase full of cash. He’s a little bit disappointed in airport security for not catching him and asking what the hell he’s doing with that

much money in cash. On the way back, Mark thinks, he'll take a private flight. Less people to deal with.

The location for the drop is a warehouse near the one Eduardo is in. Mark goes alone while the specialist's team heads to the warehouse. Mark doesn't really know what they're going to do and he doesn't care.

He waits there, briefcase in hand. At the appointed time, three men come into the building. Mark says, "I have your money," and sets the briefcase on the floor. "Now where's Eduardo?"

The one who seems to be in charge barks an order and the taller of his minions disappears outside. He reappears a moment later with Eduardo in his arms. He dumps Eduardo onto the floor and rips off the blindfold.

Eduardo blinks, eyes adjusting to the light, and stares at Mark. "Mark?" he asks, voice croaky. Mark is standing in the middle of the room, wearing a hoodie and jeans with flip flops. Of course.

"Hey, 'Wardo," Mark says, eying the men. "Take your money. I'm taking Eduardo." He steps forward and grabs Eduardo while the leader opens the briefcase. "It's all there," he adds.

"Mark, what the —" Eduardo says and his voice breaks into a horrible cough. He feels like his head is about to explode, like his blood is boiling. Mark takes him from the warehouse. "Mark," Eduardo says again once he can speak. "You just paid them five million dollars."

"Yes," Mark agrees. "Yes, I did."

"You're fucking crazy," Eduardo informs Mark matter-of-factly.

"So I've been told," Mark says.

Mark decides, after Eduardo falls asleep inside the car, that he should probably take Eduardo to a hospital. Eduardo had coughed so hard on the way to Mark's rental that he'd almost fallen over. Mark did not go to all that trouble just to have Eduardo crap out on him.

So he takes the car and drives to a hospital and waves his name and money in people's faces until they admit Eduardo. He calls the specialist once the nurse takes Eduardo and says, "I got him. I took him to a hospital."

"I'll send the tracer's signal to the cops," the specialist says. "This went well, Mr. Zuckerberg."

"Yes," Mark agrees and he hangs up. The nurse tries to give him paperwork, but he tells her that he quite honestly couldn't tell her anything about Eduardo more recent than about 2004, and she gives up.

He tries to read one of the waiting room magazines, but the articles are boring and written for the average person. He gets a call after about half an hour, which is a welcome break to the boredom. Janet's voice is incredulous as she says, "The police found the men and reclaimed the money."

"Will I be getting back?" Mark asks. "I'd like to give it to Eduardo."

"Where are you?" Janet demands, ignoring his question. "The police want to talk to you."

“Should I have a lawyer?” Mark asks. He’s sure by now his lawyer would be excited by a lawsuit that didn’t involve intellectual property theft. “I can call someone.”

“You probably should. The police are pretty pissed that you didn’t come to them.” Janet has a distinct tone of *I told you so* that even Mark can hear.

“Call them. Have them meet me here.” He rattles off the name of the hospital. “I’m not leaving him here.”

“Fine,” Janet says. “Be prepared to have a long fight about obstructing a police investigation.”

“There was no police investigation,” Mark points out.

“Good, you should be sure to point that out to them.” Her voice abruptly becomes muffled as she says, “No, Dustin, Eduardo is safe. That’s not the problem.”

“Janet, I’m going,” Mark says and he hung up after she makes a noise of acknowledgement. He walked into Eduardo’s room and sat down next to Eduardo’s bed. He closed his hand over Eduardo’s wrist. Eduardo doesn’t wake up. “Wardo, please wake up,” he says softly.

Eduardo comes to in a hospital room, feeling like his lungs are filled with crackling wrapping paper. He inhales sharply and immediately starts coughing. A nurse is at his side after only a few seconds, lifting a cup of water to his lips. He drinks gratefully and that’s when he hears Mark’s voice outside his room.

“- wasn’t about to let the police screw this up. He’s my best friend –”

“Mr. Zuckerberg, Eduardo Saverin hasn’t been your best friend in years and if you think we don’t know that –”

“What exactly are you trying to say, Detective?” Mark doesn’t sound dangerous; he never sounds dangerous. He sounds like he honestly wants to know what the detective is trying to say, but with the full force of his billions and his reputation behind him, he somehow manages to sound menacing. “I got him back safely.”

“You shouldn’t have –”

“Mr. Zuckerberg, Mr. Saverin has woken up,” a quiet voice says.

“Excuse me, Detective.” A moment later, Mark is pushing open the door to Eduardo’s room. “Eduardo?”

“What the hell, Mark?” demands Eduardo in a raspy voice. “What happened?”

“I rescued you,” Mark says matter-of-factly.

“How much did you pay for me?” Eduardo demands.

“Wardo –”

“How much?”

Mark lets out a breath and says, “Five million. But I would have paid more.”

“You would have paid more. Jesus, Mark, you know that we’re not friends anymore, right?”

"I have been made aware of that fact, yes," Mark agrees. "And there was a tracking device in the briefcase."

"So you didn't actually lose any money in rescuing me," Eduardo says after a moment. "Of course."

"How many times do I have to tell you that I don't care about money?" Mark sits down in the chair next to Eduardo's bed. "The money wasn't the point, Eduardo."

"Then what was the point?" Eduardo wants to know.

"Having you safe." Mark tilts his head to the side. Eduardo stares at him. "No ulterior motive, Wardo."

"I find that hard to believe, Mark," Eduardo says, shifting. "Do you know what's wrong with me?"

"You have pneumonia," Mark answers.

"Pneumonia," Eduardo says blankly. "Seriously?"

"Why do you think you've been coughing?" asks Mark sarcastically.

Eduardo glares at him and tries to roll over, but is hampered by an IV in his arm. "Shit."

"You probably shouldn't do that," Mark says needlessly.

It's five days before the doctors let Eduardo out of the hospital, and he spends three of them talking to cops. "No, I don't know who they were," he says to one. "No, I didn't know that Mr. Zuckerberg was planning on rescuing me," he says to another.

He goes back to the apartment he keeps in New York and finds Mark sitting on his couch. "What the fuck are you doing here?" he demands, trying to ignore his labored breathing.

"You shouldn't be home," Mark says. "How did you convince them to let you out?"

"I can be very persuasive," Eduardo mutters and he drops down on the couch next to Mark. "You did a lot to get me back."

"Yes," Mark agrees.

"Why?"

Mark lifts his shoulders. "Because I didn't want you to die because of me."

"That's not a good enough reason, Mark!" Eduardo exclaims. "Do you understand why I'm confused, here?"

"Wardo, I was angry with you years ago, when you froze the account," Mark says calmly. "I haven't been angry with you in a long time."

"Oh, so you admit that what you did was petty and out of anger," Eduardo snaps, crossing his arms. He should feel victorious about Mark's admission, but he can't bring himself to be.

"Finally." He moves to get up and leave, possibly to call security and have them take Mark away.

“Eduardo,” Mark says, “I have recently come to the conclusion that I am in love with you.”

Eduardo drops back into his seat and says, “*Excuse me?*”

“I have recently come –” Mark starts to repeat and Eduardo interrupts him with, “Yeah, I heard you, Mark, I just don’t *understand* you.”

Mark drums his fingers on his knee. “My first thought on getting the ransom note was that you were worth far more than they asked.”

“And?”

“And I realized that there is no price they could have asked that I wouldn’t have paid.” Mark observes Eduardo without any outward indication that he realizes how weird the entire situation is. “Also, I know how you sound when you have an orgasm.”

Eduardo just stares at Mark for a moment, at a complete loss for words. Then, he says, “What?”

“When we both had sex in the bathroom,” Mark says. “I could hear your breathing. And you slip into Portuguese, did you know that?”

“Mark, what the hell?” Eduardo demands and that’s when Mark kisses him.

Mark kisses very precisely, his tongue moving in careful sweeps across Eduardo’s mouth. He curls his fingers along the line of Eduardo’s jaw, fingers gentle against Eduardo’s skin. Eduardo’s mouth opens in surprise and Mark takes advantage of that, leaning in to Eduardo. His hands are cold.

Eduardo pulls away sharply and says stupidly, “I’m sick.”

“I don’t really see the relevance,” Mark says.

“Mark –”

“If you want me to leave, just say so,” Mark says sharply. “Don’t bullshit me, Wardo, you never did that before.”

Eduardo stares at Mark in shock. His lips feel like they’ve been electrified and his fingers are tingling, and he can’t stop looking at Mark’s mouth. “Mark,” he says after a moment. “I need to think about this. And I’m still sick.”

“Tell me to leave, Wardo,” Mark returns. They stare at each other for a long moment.

Finally, Eduardo says, “No.” He gets up and heads for his bedroom, shutting the door behind him.

Mark lies back on Eduardo’s couch and drums his fingers together. He gets bored after only a few minutes and takes out his cell phone to call Janet. “I need a laptop,” he tells her.

“Go and get one,” she replies promptly. “You realize I’m all the way across the country from you?”

“I’m sure you can work something out,” Mark says.

“You have an over-inflated sense of what I can do,” Janet tells him, but it’s only a little while later

that someone shows up at the apartment with a laptop. Mark takes it to sit on the couch and checks his email, finding over five hundred unread messages. He sighs – emails are easily his least favorite part of his work – but sets out to read them.

He's still reading when Eduardo emerges from his room almost six hours later, looking a little better. Eduardo stops when he sees Mark, then shakes his head and disappears into the kitchen.

He returns after an indeterminable period of time, a sandwich in hand, and sits down next to Mark. "What are you still doing here?" he asks.

"You're sick," Mark says. "And you could be suffering psychological damage."

Eduardo eyeballs him. "The doctor told you to say that."

"Yes," Mark agrees. "And you checked yourself out early."

"I didn't need to stay."

"Says you." They stare at each other, Mark's fingers still poised over the keyboard. He'd left off mid-sentence in an email to his mother explaining what he'd done. She had been very worried after the announcements on the news.

"Mark, what are you doing?" Eduardo says after a long, mostly awkward silence.

"I don't know," Mark confesses. "I've never really been in love before."

Eduardo chokes around his next bite of sandwich and spends about a minute coughing, his eyes watering. When his throat finally clears, he says, "*Mark*. You can't just say shit like that."

"Why not?" asks Mark. "You always told me I needed to be more in touch with my feelings."

"I never said such a thing," Eduardo protests.

"Yeah, but you thought it." Mark waits to see if Eduardo refutes that, but to his satisfaction and private vindication, Eduardo remains silent. "So."

"So," Eduardo agrees. They stare at each other for a long, painfully drawn-out moment, and then Eduardo says, "You should go back to California."

"Are you telling me to leave?"

"I'm telling you that you have a job and a business to run."

Mark points at the laptop. "I know." He waits for Eduardo to say something else and then he says, "I still haven't heard you tell me to leave."

"Shut the fuck up, Mark," Eduardo says and he gets up again, leaving the living room.

Mark stays for two more days. Eduardo studiously ignores him for that entire time, spending most of his time in his room, sleeping, or watching television. Mark finally has to return to California on the third day when Dustin calls him about some urgent matter with shareholders. Mark flies out, but leaves the laptop behind after deleting everything except a word document that says, *I'm sorry* and *You should still be in the hospital*.

Mark is sitting in his office about a week later when Chris, who's sitting across from him, gets a

text. He reads it and says, “Uh oh.”

“What?” asks Mark, not really paying that much attention, focusing instead on the screen of his computer.

“Heads up,” Chris says and Mark looks up in time to see Eduardo storming towards the office. Mark abruptly feels like he’s having déjà vu, which is ridiculous because that’s just a neurological anomaly and doesn’t apply to events from years ago.

Eduardo throws the doors to Mark’s office open and says, “Mark!”

“I’m out,” Chris says and the coward slips out of the door, leaving Mark and Eduardo in the office together. Eduardo slams the door behind him and stares at Mark.

Mark waits for him to say something, but when nothing seems forthcoming, he says, “ Did you want something?”

“You could have at least said goodbye,” Eduardo says irritably and he leans across the desk, planting his elbows on the surface. “Marcus.”

“Wardo,” Mark says, now slightly confused. His confusion only increases when Eduardo leans further across the desk and kisses him. It’s a light kiss, barely brushing Mark’s lips.

“You never said you were sorry before,” Eduardo says when he pulls back. “And I didn’t ever thank you for rescuing me.”

“You don’t need to –” Mark starts.

“Thank you,” Eduardo interrupts. They stare at each other, and then Eduardo holds out his hand. Mark takes it after only a moment’s hesitation.

“There we go,” Eduardo says. “Now we’re talking again.”

“We’ve been talking,” Mark points out. Eduardo just raises his eyebrows at Mark and Mark nods after a moment. “Okay.”

Eduardo leaves then, the door clicking shut behind him. Mark leans back in his desk chair and drums his fingers on the armrest. Chris peeks in and says, “What the hell was that about?”

Mark shrugs, but he can’t help but grin helplessly. Chris eyes him suspiciously, but drops the subject and sits down. Mark types out an email to Eduardo while Chris talks. It says, *Dinner?*

It’s about an hour before Mark gets a response.

As long as it isn’t chicken.

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